United Nations S/2008/826

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 December 2008

Original: English

Letter dated 23 December 2008 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to write to you regarding the support to my Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)-affected areas, Joaquim Alberto Chissano, the former President of Mozambique. As you will recall, on 21 November 2007, I had proposed, and members of the Security Council had subsequently agreed, that the mandate of the temporary Liaison Office should be extended and his Office upgraded to a special political mission for the Special Envoy for the LRA-affected areas in Uganda for a period of one year through 31 December 2008 (see S/2007/719). This was to enable my Special Envoy to move the peace talks forward until their completion.

In March 2008, the Chief Mediator, Riek Machar Teny, Vice-President of the Government of Southern Sudan, and Mr. Chissano helped the parties successfully conclude their negotiations and sign agreements on all the various agenda items. However, regrettably, the leader of LRA, Joseph Kony, has yet to sign the final peace agreement which provides the capstone for the various agreements. His most recent failure to sign the final peace agreement has resulted in the launching by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Southern Sudan of joint military action against his camps in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am told that this military action is intended not to derail the peace process, but rather to pressure Joseph Kony into assembling, with his rebel forces, in Ri-Kwangba (Southern Sudan), and signing the final peace agreement.

It is possible, therefore, that the political process, suspended in early December by the Chief Mediator, may resume shortly. The Government of Uganda remains committed to the continuation of the peace process, and the door remains open for Joseph Kony to sign the final peace agreement. Meanwhile, as a direct result of the successes in the peace process so far, security has returned to northern Uganda, economic activities are gradually being resumed, and internally displaced persons have returned home. It is important, therefore, that my Special Envoy continue, on my behalf, his good offices in the region with the support of the Office in Kampala.

The mandate of the Office of my Special Envoy will expire at the end of this month. I recommend, therefore, that the mandate be extended for an additional year, until 31 December 2009, to allow my Special Envoy to continue his efforts towards achieving a durable peace in northern Uganda. Should the Security Council agree to extend the special political mission through 31 December 2009, it would inherit the existing mandate.

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The Office would continue to perform the following activities: (a) assist the Special Envoy in developing a relationship of mutual trust among the parties and the mediation and in building their confidence in the political process; (b) assist the Special Envoy in coordinating the efforts of the regional players, donors and civil society organizations involved; (c) follow up on the peace talks on behalf of the Special Envoy and promote a peaceful agreement between the Government of Uganda and LRA through the support of the African ambassadors; (d) coordinate the activities of the five African ambassadors/guarantors of the peace process; (e) serve as a focal point for the Special Envoy's regional activities, including the coordination of all international activities in support of the talks; (f) liaise with all stakeholders in Uganda and in the region; (g) monitor and analyse internal and regional political and security developments in Uganda and neighbouring countries; (h) coordinate the activities of the unit in Juba; and (i) maintain close consultation with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan on security and military issues in connection with the Special Envoy's mandate.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon